



Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

*...leading the cooperative effort to preserve, restore
and enhance the unique natural and human
environment of the Lake Tahoe Region.*

A Property Owner's Guide to CUTTING TREES

A Word About Forest Health

The forests of the Lake Tahoe Region are going through a startling transition.

For Thousands of years before European settlers arrived, the forest ecosystem managed itself. Lightning caused low intensity fires which crept through the forests, thinning, cleansing and recycling the resources within the ecosystem.

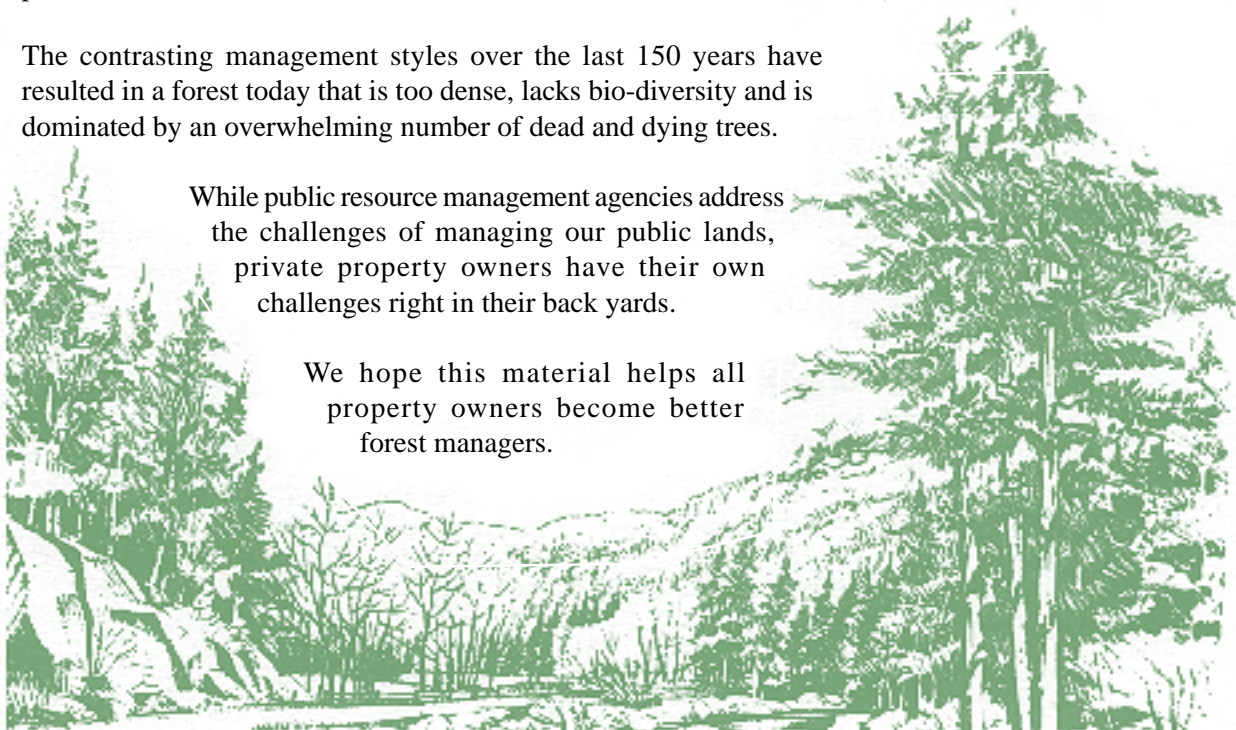
European pioneers arrived on the scene in the 19th century and took a utilization approach to forest management. Responding to a need for timber to shore up the silver mines in the Comstock Lode, loggers clear-cut many Tahoe Basin slopes of the biggest and hardiest trees.

As the forest grew back, forest resource managers of the 20th century took a protectionist approach. Wildland fires were suppressed as more and more people began inhabiting the forested areas of the Region. And, because the Tahoe Basin forest are managed for watershed protection and not timber protection, fewer trees were cut than in forests in other areas.

The contrasting management styles over the last 150 years have resulted in a forest today that is too dense, lacks bio-diversity and is dominated by an overwhelming number of dead and dying trees.

While public resource management agencies address the challenges of managing our public lands, private property owners have their own challenges right in their back yards.

We hope this material helps all property owners become better forest managers.



Managing Your Forest

There are things you can do to create and maintain your own healthy forest. You can promote the growth of native species and avoid introducing non-native plant types which may spread to areas where they are undesirable. You can thin dense stands of trees to promote healthier growth in the remaining trees and to allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor. And, to help prevent the spread of insects and disease, you can remove dead and dying trees.

Your first step to a healthier forest is to contact your local state forester for assistance.

**Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF),
California Department of Forestry and
Fire Protection (CDF)
...your partners in forest management**

State foresters can give you professional advice about how to improve the health of the forest in your back yard.

At your request, they will visit your private forest and give you tips on what species of native vegetation will thrive on your property, how to plant and maintain vegetation, how to trim and

prune plants to keep them healthy, and which trees should be removed.

During the same visit, your local state forester can issue a permit to remove certain trees.

Under an agreement with TRPA, NDF and CDF foresters can mark trees for removal if they present a hazard to life or property, or if removal would enhance forest health and diversity. (See table in this brochure.)

Trees which are marked for removal on **TRPA-approved plans** for a new project do not have to be marked by a qualified forester.

If trees are encroaching on overhead utility wires or if roots are encroaching on underground utilities, contact your local utility district as well as your state forester.

TRPA and other forest resource managers encourage you to hire only licensed contractors to remove dead or live trees from your property. This helps ensure that the job will be done professionally and in compliance with the rules established by the permitting agencies.

Publicly-Owned Lots in Your Neighborhood

Some vacant lots in your neighborhood may be owned by a public agency. The U.S. Forest Service, the California Tahoe Conservancy, the Nevada Division of State Lands, your local utility district, or your city or county may own property in your neighborhood.

If you and your neighbors are interested in becoming land stewards of the vacant publicly-owned lots in your area, call or visit your county assessor's office to determine which agency owns the parcel and then contact the agency for more information.

Defensible Space

TRPA strongly encourages homeowners to maintain a defensible space around their structures. Several good manuals are available which explain how to create an effective defensible space. Contact your local fire department, the Nevada Cooperative Extension, or CDF or NDF for more information.

TRPA also encourages you to maintain as much native vegetation as you can while incorporating the concept of defensible space zones and ladder fuel management around your home.

And, Please, stop short of clearing your landscaping to bare dirt. Rather, maintain at least a thin vegetative, duff, or mulch layer to prevent soil erosion.

Permits

Permits Required for Tree Removal From Private Property

Proposed Activity of Project	TRPA Requirements
Removal of live or dead* trees less than 6" dbh.**	No Permit Required
Removal of dead trees greater than 6" dbh from parcels of any size.	No Permit Required
Removal of fewer than 100 live trees 6" dbh or greater.	Complete a TRPA Qualified Exempt from available from TRPA, NDF or CDF. Trees to be removed must be marked by NDF or CDF.
Removal of more than 100 live trees 6" dbh or greater.	TRPA permit required. Harvest plan prepared by a professional forester and environmental checklist required. Further environmental documents may be required.

* A dead tree is defined as one which is **totally** lacking green limbs or needles through the crown. It is not required, but it recommended to contact NDF or CDF concerning dead trees to determine the cause of death and to prevent problems with adjacent healthy trees.

** Diameter at breast height (4'-6" above ground)

Remember to contact your city or county administration office to check on local requirements.

WARNING!

Cutting or limbing live trees six inches in diameter or greater to enhance the view from your property is a violation of the TRPA Regional Plan. In fact, cutting or limbing any trees of that size without a TRPA permit is a violation.

TRPA investigates all complaints of alleged illegal tree-cutting and has the authority to seek fines from violators.

You **must** have authorization from the property owner, public or private, before removing any live or dead trees from someone else's property.

For More Information...

California Tahoe Conservancy
Bruce Eisner (530) 542-5580

Nevada Cooperative Extension
John Christopherson (702) 832-4150

California Department of Forestry
and Fire Protection

- El Dorado County Steve Harcourt (530) 541-6564
- Placer County Dan Scatena (530) 587-8926

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Mike Solt (702) 588-4547
Paul Nielsen (for timber harvest permits)

Nevada Division of Forestry
Rick Jones (702) 849-2500

Units States Forest Service
Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit
Linda Massey (530) 573-2600



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